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CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for promoting wound healing in mammals, said method comprising the steps of:
applying a vacuum to a region of a wound site on a mammal; and
effecting a change in the mammal's inflammatory response at said region while said vacuum is applied thereto.
- 10 2. The method for promoting wound healing as recited in claim 1, wherein said effecting a change step comprises controlling the mammal's local metabolic function at said region.
Method
- 15 3. The method for promoting wound healing as recited in claim 2, wherein said effecting a change step comprises accelerating the mammal's local metabolic function at said region to encourage rapid capillary occlusion and accelerated initiation of the cleanup and rebuilding stages of the mammal's inflammatory response.
- 20 4. The method for promoting wound healing as recited in claim 3, wherein said effecting a change step comprises heating said region.
- 25 5. The method for promoting wound healing as recited in claim 2, wherein said effecting a change step comprises retarding the mammal's local metabolic function as said region to prevent over-activation of the mammal's inflammatory response.
- 30 6. The method for promoting wound healing as recited in claim 5, wherein said effecting a change step comprises cooling said region.
- 35 7. The method for promoting wound healing as recited in any of the preceding claims, wherein said applying a vacuum step comprises the steps of:
packing said wound site with a foam pad, said foam pad being in fluid communication with a vacuum source;
sealing said region, including said foam pad, with a wound drape; and
communicating said vacuum from said vacuum source through said foam pad to said region.

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8. The method for promoting wound healing as recited in claim 7, wherein said effecting a change step comprises the steps of:

circulating a fluid about said region; and

controlling the temperature of said fluid to obtain said change.

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9. The method for promoting wound healing as recited in claim 8, wherein said fluid is circulated about said region in a flexible envelope, said flexible envelope having an inlet and an outlet for fluid communication therethrough of said fluid.

10. 10. The method for promoting wound healing as recited in claim 9, said method further comprising the step of sealing said flexible envelope, with said wound drape, between said foam pad and said wound drape.

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